



Tuesday May 3, 2005 Edition

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## Mercer board decides agritourism is permitted

**By ANN R. HARNEY**  
**Staff Writer**

HARRODSBURG - Agritourism is a permitted use in two agricultural zones in Mercer County.

That was the decision of the Greater Harrodsburg/Mercer County Planning and Zoning Commission Monday night after hearing a presentation by Pete and Brenda Cashel and their attorney, Bruce Smith.

While the ruling by the commission seems simple on its face, the Cashels' [Terrapin Hill Farm](#) is used for more than just an educational center. There are two music events each year, one in June and the other during the Harvest Festival held on the Mackville Road farm each September.

The Cashels were at the zoning panel meeting Monday at the request of the

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commission. They were asked to explain why they had gone on with their business after the Board of Adjustments and Appeals denied the couple's request for a rural occupation permit because the planned business did not fall within the parameters of a rural occupation.

In the meantime, the couple was awarded a \$27,300 grant from the Agricultural Development Board for an agriculture education center. Minutes of the Board of Adjustments and Appeals meeting at which the Cashels were denied a permit say a group of the farm's neighbors objected to the couple's plans.

None of those neighbors was present at Monday's meeting. Many of the people attending the regular monthly meeting of the zoning board were there to support the Cashels' plan. The couple also presented letters in support of their venture from the tourism commission, Tony Shirley of the Extension Service, and Harvey Mitchell, farm manager at Anderson Circle Farm.

Pete Cashel presented a brochure outlining agritourism on 22 farms in Mercer County; Smith said Cashel had helped prepare the brochure.

### Cashels agree to limitations on music events

Because most of the neighbors' concerns related to the music events, the Cashels agreed to a number of limitations for those events. Prior to accepting the limitations, commission attorney David Patrick said only the Board of Adjustments and Appeals can set limitations when it issues a conditional use permit.

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Smith continued to argue that the Cashels' business does not meet requirements for rural occupations. The couple agreed not to use the lack of a conditional use permit as a defense if the zoning board found them to be in violation of their agreements. They also agreed that if they sell the farm, the uses they are making of the farm will not transfer with the deed.

The other limitations the Cashels offered deal with electrified music and the hours it can be played. No such music will be allowed on weekdays and must stop at midnight at two main events. Electrified music at private events will end at 11 p.m. Neighbors will be notified two weeks in advance of any music events and offered free tickets in exchange for notifying the Cashels of illegal parking or people trying to sneak in.

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